

## **Minutes - King County Rural Forest Commission Meeting Thursday, November 13, 2014, Preston Community Center**

Commissioners present: Nate Veranth, forest landowner (Chair); Dick Ryon, North Bend resident; Doug McClelland, Washington Department of Natural Resources; Bernie McKinney, forest landowner; Brandy Reed, King Conservation District

Guests: Julie Stangell, Laurel Baum, Abraham Ngu, Nicole Studevant, Sean Jeronimo, Ian Hash

Staff: David Kimmett, Parks and Recreation Division; Beth leDoux, Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD); Bill Loeber, WRLD; Kathy Creahan, WLRD; Kristi McClelland, WLRD; Jim Simmonds, WLRD; Linda Vane, Liaison

Chair Nate Veranth called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m.

Approval of the minutes from the September 11, 2014 meeting was postponed until the January meeting.

### **RFC election of officers 2015**

Nate Veranth announced that elections for 2015 officers and selection of the two at-large members of the Executive Committee would take place at the January 2015 meeting.

Nate also reported on the status of the Rural Forest Commission representative on the King Conservation District Advisory Committee. He explained that Sandy Miller, who has represented the Commission on the Advisory Committee, could not continue in that role. Nate said that Bernie McKinney has agreed to take her place.

### **Staff and Agency Reports and Announcement**

*King Conservation District (KCD)* – Brandy Reed reported that the KCD Advisory Committee had endorsed the KCD proposed Implementation Plan and the associated system of rates and charges on November 12, 2014. She explained that the King County Council would hold a public hearing on the KCD proposed 2015 Proposed Program of Work on Monday, November 17, and would vote on the measure on the same day.

Dick Ryon added that Claire Dyckman, who retired from King County's Agriculture Program in June, had been awarded the 2014 KCD Conservation Leader service award.

*King County recreation trails permit revision* – Nate Veranth reported that members of the Commission's Executive Committee had met with staff at the Department of Permitting and Environmental Services (DPER) to discuss revisions to the process for issuing permits for soft surface trails. A discussion among the commission members ensued. Nate said that DPER's Randy Sandin would present a proposal to the commission at the January 2015 meeting.

*RFC Administration* – Linda Vane said that there were a number of administrative matters that would be communicated to the Commission via email before the next meeting.

### **Strategic Climate Action Plan, 2015 update**

Linda Vane, Commission Liaison

Linda provided an overview of the purpose and content of the 2012 King County Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP). She explained that the County recently initiated the process of updating the SCAP

and requested input from the Commission. Among the comments and recommendations were the following:

- Expressed support for the County's Biosolids Program.
- Re-evaluate the Transfer of Development Rights Program targets and strategies.
- Consider making a distinction between large tract forestlands and small lot family forests where applicable.
- Address the financial and other constraints that small lot forest owners confront when they seek to implement forest stewardship plans as a priority action.
- Provide more information on relative carbon impacts of the County's various actions.
- County-owned acreage is often acquired in an unhealthy condition or a young stand condition, so management should be planned with the investment in carbon sequestration accounted for. Early investments in forest management will give a trajectory for better carbon benefits.

**University of Washington students report on Black Diamond Natural Area forest stewardship plan**  
Abraham Ngu, School of Environmental & Forest Sciences, University of Washington

A group of University of Washington forestry students, Abraham Ngu, Nicole Studevant, Sean Jeronimo and Ian Hash reported on the outcomes of an 11-week course University of Washington class in Spring quarter 2014, during which students developed a forest stewardship plan for the combined Henry's Ridge-Black Diamond-Ravensdale Retreat natural area near Maple Valley. Abraham explained that during the course, the students learned practical skills such as how to use a range finder, timber cruising, assessing log costs and engineering. The project resulted in a forest stewardship plan with long-term objectives for 645 acres of forested land. The four student speakers described various aspects of the planning process and the key elements of the completed forest stewardship plan. The project was conducted in partnership with King County Parks and Recreation Division.

Comments from the Commission included:

- Commended the University and the Parks and Recreation Division for offering the course. This training is critical because these are the skills that forestry graduates need for their first job in silviculture.
- If the County makes a profit from the variable density thinnings, they should put the money in a fund that will pay for the maintenance that the forest will need over time, such as removing invasive weeds.
- A speaker mentioned that holly was found on the site. Remove immediately, rather than monitor, any invasive weeds that are observed.
- Supported the public input elements of the forest plan. It is vital to allow adequate time for public input on any habitat restoration or forest management activities well in advance.
- Consider additional funding sources and potential partners such as NGOs when the course is offered again.
- In designing objectives, consider the landscape surrounding the project site. There is a lot of hardwood in the area already so one might want to look at returning the site to a conifer dominated stand, its most likely old-growth condition.

**Snoqualmie Watershed forestry work group: status report on opportunities for protection of sub-basin hydrology**

Beth leDoux, Snoqualmie Watershed Technical Coordinator, Water and Land Resources Division

Beth leDoux began her remarks with a summary of the background of the project and a description of project accomplishments since she last met with the Commission in January 2014. Beth said that the Snohomish Basin Protection Plan had been completed and that the project team was in the process of reaching out to stakeholders such as the Commission to request input on a “Toolbox” associated with the plan. The purpose of the Toolbox is to create a reference document that describes the various informational and financial resources that are available to implement actions to further protection of the Snohomish River Basin hydrology. Beth commented that the project team anticipates that both at basin and county-level project managers would identify tools and data that could be added to the list as the technical information gets used over time.

Beth distributed a table showing the many and varied tools discussed in the current draft of the Protection Plan Toolbox document. She guided the Commission through a description of the resources on the list and their applications. In conclusion, Beth requested feedback and questions. A discussion with Commission members ensued.

Beth invited the Commission members to submit additional comments or recommendations through the end of the current public comment period on a form that she would send.

**Parks and Recreation Division Update**

David Kimmett Natural Resource Lands Program/Project Manager, Parks & Recreation Division

David Kimmett provided a short report on the Parks and Recreation Division (Parks) plans for 2015. He explained that the King County Parks Levy pays for a lot of forest stewardship activities. He referred to the Commission’s recommendation in 2009 that Parks create a new position for a full-time forester. Dave reported that Parks considered that advice and decided to convert an existing position to that of a general resource manager with a focus on forestry rather than convert the position to a single focus on forestry. Parks recently hired an experienced forester to fill that position. Dave said that would bring the Forest Stewardship Program staff up to 4 people.

Dave said that Parks is doing a lot of things to supplement their Forest Stewardship Program. He said that dedicated funding for forest stewardship in 2015 -16 will help Parks elevate stewardship planning and implementation. A dedicated fund has been created that could be used for on-call accounts with forest consultants. In addition, he explained, Parks anticipates further cooperation with the University of Washington to provide learning opportunities to forestry students.

There was no public comment.

**Concluding remarks**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

**Next meeting**

Linda Vane will poll the members to determine the date for January 2015 meeting.

Staff Liaison: Linda Vane, at 206-477-4842 or [linda.vane@kingcounty.gov](mailto:linda.vane@kingcounty.gov)